

STIMULUS Project

Progress Report 2011/12

Placing Cambridge University students in local schools to support science, mathematics and technology classes

stimulus.ucam.org



STIMULUS is a community service programme which gives Cambridge University students the opportunity to work with pupils in local schools, helping with Maths, Science, ICT or Technology lessons. STIMULUS students work as volunteer teaching assistants in the classroom, alongside the class teacher.

In the 2011/12 academic year STIMULUS created 245 placements for University of Cambridge student volunteers. 111 placements were filled in the Michaelmas Term and 134 in the Lent Term in 18 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, 3 sixth-form colleges, and one special school. All placements are located within the city of Cambridge and nearby villages.

STIMULUS volunteers have been recruited from a wide range of disciplines: the majority are reading Mathematics, Engineering, Natural Sciences, Medicine, Computer Science, Chemical Engineering or Economics.

In 2012 the STIMULUS programme will celebrate its 25th anniversary.

“I’ve had a wonderful time helping to teach Science to the Year 1 students. My STIMULUS placement is something I look forward to attending every week!”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12

“An extremely enjoyable experience that complements my studies brilliantly”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12

The main aims of the STIMULUS programme are:

- to provide support for the teaching of Mathematics, Science, ICT and Technology in schools;
- to provide pupils with positive role models of young scientists, mathematicians and technologists;
- to encourage all pupils to develop and maintain an interest in Mathematics, Science and Technology;
- to contribute to enrichment opportunities for school students;
- to give university students opportunities to develop their communication and interpersonal skills;
- to give university students experience in the classroom and a better understanding of education;
- to provide a link between the University and the local community.

The project also provides valuable experience to those students who are considering a teaching career and often helps them decide whether to make this career choice. Each year we have some students who go on to follow a PGCE course, to join the Teach First scheme or the Graduate Teacher Programme, or to participate in the Students Associate Scheme during their vacation. STIMULUS scheme experience proves to be an extremely positive aspect in their applications.


How do STIMULUS volunteers help in schools?

Examples include:

- Helping generally to support pupils in the classroom
- Assisting with practical work
- Encouraging pupils to talk about their work, using key vocabulary
- Asking questions which help pupils develop their understanding
- Encouraging uninterested pupils to engage with the task
- Helping sixth-formers during a lunchtime “surgery”
- Taking practical materials in from a university department
- Taking a small group to work on extension topics
- Working one-to-one with an exceptionally able pupil
- Discussing university applications with sixth-formers
- Helping with after school Science Clubs and Homework clubs

“[The STIMULUS volunteer] taught the group Probability... Well done and very well explained, supportive to students and myself throughout... A real asset to the class”

Secondary school teacher 2011/12



“STIMULUS has greatly enhanced my interest in teaching as a career, but even beside that I have learned so many transferable skills from working alongside a teacher and leading a small group of children by myself too.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12

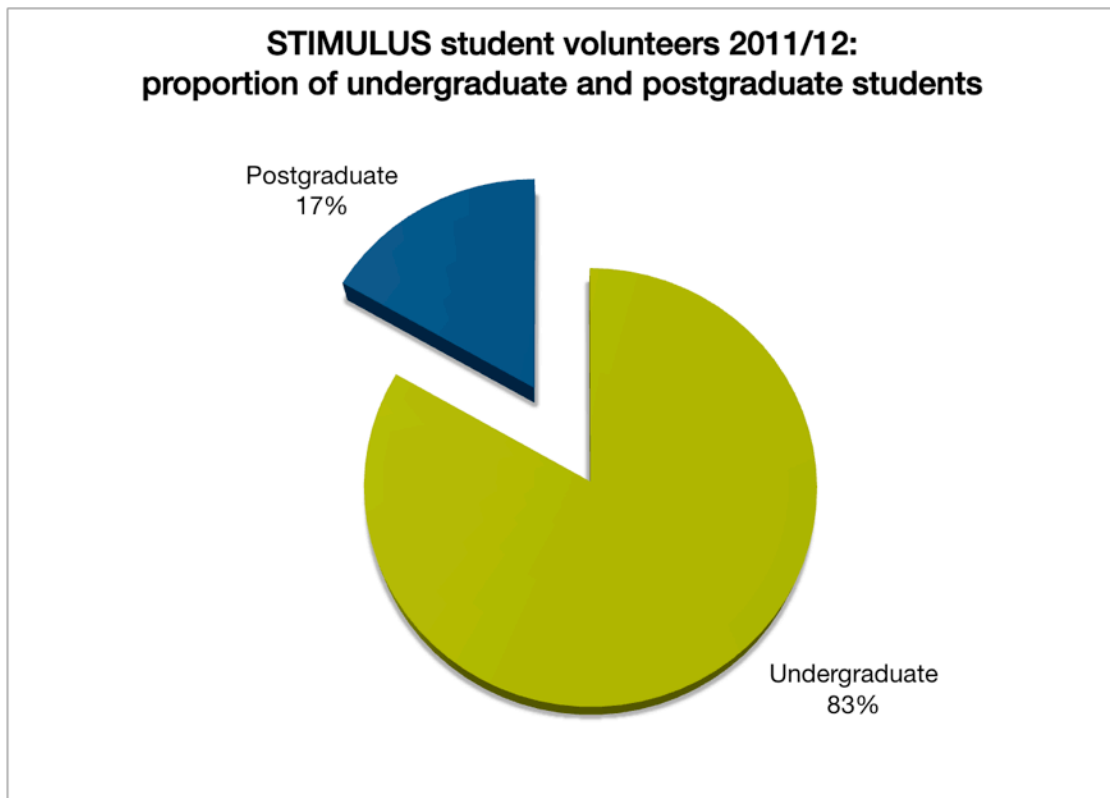
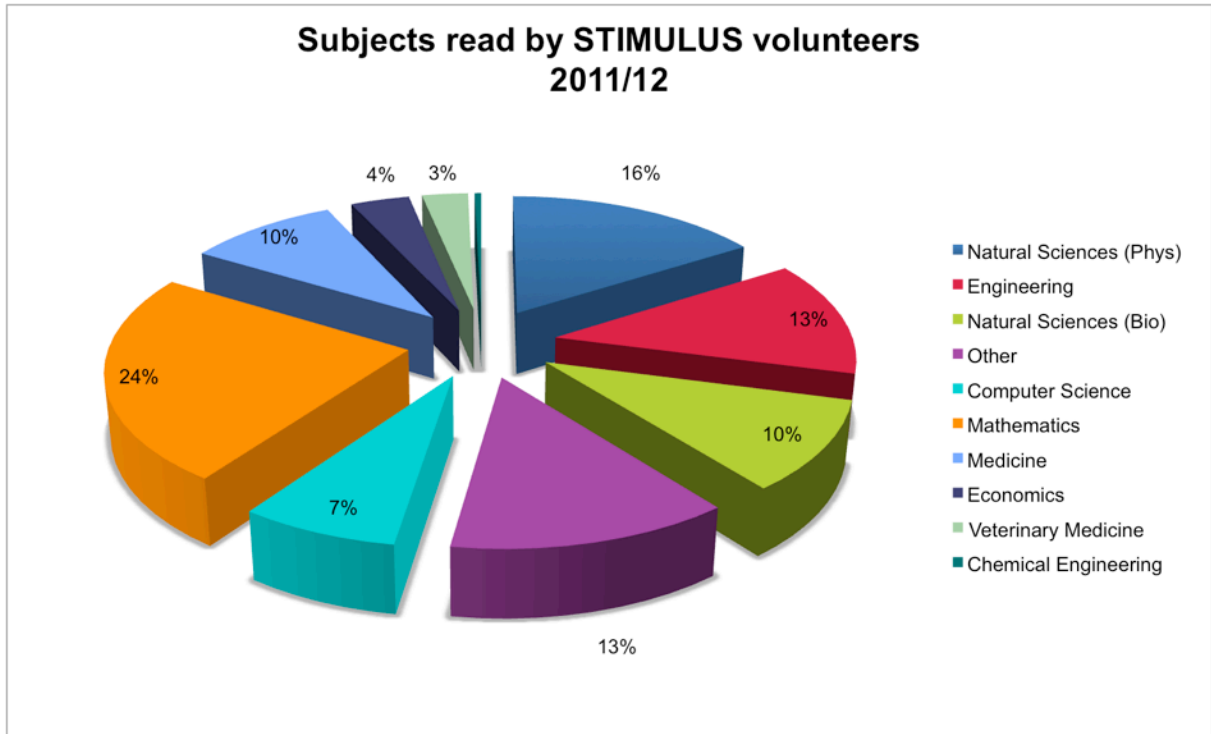
Volunteers acquire a range of skills from participating in the scheme:

- **74%** of students believed that STIMULUS had **improved their communication skills**, and **74%** that their placements had **improved their ability to pitch explanations to different audiences**.
- Organisation and interpersonal skills are developed, as volunteers need to organise their work around their visits and work alongside teachers and students.
- STIMULUS can also help to develop and support volunteers' confidence and leadership skills: **80%** of students felt that their STIMULUS placement had made them **more confident**, and **57%** that it had made them **better at taking the initiative**.
- Many students will be involved in teaching in different contexts during their careers, and develop their teaching skills through their STIMULUS placement. Some students use the scheme to find out more about teaching as a career, and to help them decide whether to apply for a PGCE, Teach First or Student Associate Scheme placement. **56%** of students replied that they were **now more likely to teach**.
- Students also value the opportunity to give something back to the local community.
- **98%** of the student volunteers **would recommend the STIMULUS programme to others**.

(All data from 2011/12 STIMULUS programme evaluation.)

“A great and enjoyable way to give something back to my local community”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12



“STIMULUS has been the perfect way to break up the busy Cambridge week, and get out of the bubble and back into the real world! It has also helped keep my studies in perspective.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12

Schools taking STIMULUS volunteers, with number of placements in each term	Michaelmas term 2011/12	Lent term 2011/12
Castle School (special school)	1	1
Cambridge International School		1
Chesterton Community College	17	22
Coleridge Community College	2	1
Fen Ditton Primary School	1	1
Girton Glebe Primary School	2	2
Grove Primary School	7	9
Hills Road Sixth Form College	4	6
Impington Village College	1	2
Kings Hedges Primary School	1	1
Long Road Sixth Form College	13	17
Manor Community College	3	3
Mayfield Primary School	5	3
Milton (Village) Primary School		1
Milton Road Primary School	3	4
Newnham Croft Primary School	4	5
Park Street Primary School	1	1
Queen Edith Community Primary School	1	1
Ridgefield Primary School	5	8
Sancton Wood School	2	2
St Alban's RC Primary School	1	1
St Bede's Inter-Church Comprehensive School	2	4
<i>Continued overleaf</i>		

Schools taking STIMULUS volunteers, with number of placements in each term	Michaelmas term 2011/12	Lent term 2011/12
St Laurence's RC Primary School	5	6
St Luke's C of E Primary School	3	3
St Matthew's C of E Primary School	3	3
St Paul's C of E Primary School	9	8
St Philip's C of E Primary School	1	2
The Netherhall School	5	2
The Perse School	2	3
The Perse School for Girls	7	11
Total number of placements	111	134

In total there were 244 student volunteers in 2011/12. One volunteer held 2 placements in the Lent term.

We were delighted that Coleridge Community College, after a hiatus last year, was able to offer placements to STIMULUS volunteers again in 2011/12.

For the second year, in addition to the programme's long-standing relationships with state-maintained schools and sixth-form colleges within the city, STIMULUS volunteers also worked with 3 independent schools in Cambridge (Sancton Wood, The Perse and The Perse School for Girls) and one placement was created in Cambridge International School. This decision was taken in consultation with student representatives and in response to high interest in participating in the scheme, and expanded the programme, enabling us to match every student volunteer with a placement.

“[The STIMULUS volunteer’s] enthusiasm rubbed off on the whole class and they always looked forward to his help with Friday Year 3 Science. He is missed by the class! And by me as a teacher!”

Primary school teacher 2011/12

Numbers of STIMULUS volunteers per term by college	Michaelmas term 2011/12	Lent term 2011/12
Christ's College	5	1
Churchill College	6	4
Clare College	4	5
Corpus Christi College		
Downing College	1	1
Emmanuel College	8	8
Fitzwilliam College	1	2
Girton College	6	6
Gonville and Caius College	7	4
Homerton College	9	9
Jesus College	12	8
Lucy Cavendish College	1	1
King's College	3	3
Magdalene College	1	3
Murray Edwards College (New Hall)	7	5
Newnham College	1	
Pembroke College	6	8
Peterhouse		3
Queens' College	1	8
Robinson College	3	4
Selwyn College	3	11
Sidney Sussex College	9	14
St Catharine's College	1	2
St Edmund's College	3	4
St John's College	7	9
Trinity College	3	3
Trinity Hall	2	3
Wolfson College	1	4
Total number of volunteers per term	111	133

“Absolutely fantastic scheme... Fun, rewarding, and has helped me find out what teaching might be like as a career.”

STIMULUS volunteer 2011/12

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all our supporters, past and present, whose generosity has enabled hundreds of volunteer Cambridge students to help in local schools. We would particularly like to thank all those who have supported us over the past year:

The Ogden Trust;

Cambridge Assessment;

Colleges of the University of Cambridge: Christ's College, Churchill College, Clare College, Clare Hall, Corpus Christi College, Darwin College, Girton College, Gonville and Caius College, Homerton College, Jesus College, Magdalene College, Murray Edwards College (formerly New Hall), Newnham College, Pembroke College, Peterhouse, Queens' College, Robinson College, Selwyn College, Sidney Sussex College, St Catharine's College, St Edmund's College, St John's College, Trinity College, Wolfson College;

University of Cambridge Departments, Faculties and Schools: Biological Sciences, Computer Laboratory, Economics, Education, Engineering, Genetics, Pharmacology, Physics;

The Departments of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics and Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics have provided in-kind support including office space and training session venues.

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